

U.S. Rep. Jack Kingston of Savannah came out into the open today with his intra-party campaign to become the next chairman of the House Appropriations Committee.

He sent the letter below to members of the Republican caucus.

Among Republicans, Kingston is four or fifth in seniority on the committee – and his success could depend on whether a waiver is granted to Jerry Lewis of California, who has already served as chairman. GOP rules prohibit a second try.

I've placed in bold what may be Kingston's best selling point – that with tough budget cuts to come, he would be capable of explaining them to a broad audience. To wit:

Dear Colleague:

I am writing to announce my decision to run for Chairman of the Appropriations Committee and to ask for your support. I believe I could be helpful in this position for a number of reasons.

Primarily, I am a committed conservative with a long track record to prove it. My lifetime score with the American Conservative Union is 96%. I've got perfect ratings from FreedomWorks and Eagle Forum, an 89% from the Club for Growth and 95% from Americans for Prosperity.

As Chairman of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee when Republican spending was at its worst, I cut the budget by 1% (not a decrease of the increase). I also introduced a number of reforms such as privatizing the power plant, reining in the runaway spending at the Capitol Visitors Center, and stopping the explosion in the Capitol Police force. In that year, I was ranked the most conservative member of the House by National Journal.

In 2007, I introduced the first major earmark reform bill with Frank Wolf and Zach Wamp. This

bill (H Con Res 263) had 160 cosponsors including most members of the Appropriations Committee as well as the Republican Study Committee and all members of leadership. It garnered a range of support from members like Chris Shays to Jeff Flake. This bill called for a moratorium on earmarks coupled with bipartisan hearings to define and reform them.

Outside of the Appropriations Committee, I worked with Democrats and Republicans alike to draft energy legislation, such as the DRIVE Act (HR 670), which brought together conservatives like **John Campbell** and Sam Brownback with then-Senators Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. I have stayed true to my conservative values but have a good working relationship with committee Democrats.

Finally, I have been an active communicator. Each week, I have had the honor of hosting Theme Team which brings in media personalities like Bob Schieffer, Joe Scarborough, Bill Kristol, Karl Rove, Fred Barnes and more. I have built personal relationships with many of them. I have also appeared on more liberal outlets like The Daily Show, The Colbert Report, Real Time with Bill Maher, and Hardball with Chris Matthews. I established one of the first blogs in Congress and have been awarded the Pollie Award and the Golden Dot Award for my efforts.

I have learned that you can play both offense and defense with the press. For example, I introduced the first legislation to drive the czar issue, the Czar Accountability and Reform Act (HR 3226), and produced a video that got more than 17,000 hits on YouTube.

I would greatly appreciate your support and look forward to talking to you in the coming days.

Sincerely,

Jack Kingston